



▶ **ANOTHER BRIDGE IS BUILT:** 27th Engineer Battalion installed an additional two Bailey bridges across the Waygal River in the Kunar Province in Northeastern Afghanistan.....4



▶ **CIVIL AFFAIRS TEAM:** Spent most of month in the field attached to an infantry company, conducting civil-military operations in support of bridge construction in their sector. .5



▶ **HHC MOTOR POOL & SUPPLY :** Person-by-person biography of the two sections. The Good the Bad and the Ugly!.....8

○ VOLUME 1 | ○ ISSUE 11 | ○ YEAR 2006

Bayonet forward

Civil Affairs Team initiates Weapons Buy Back Program

The Chamberlain S-5 Section initiated a weapons buy-back program for CTF Chamberlain prior to leaving Bagram, as an enhancement to force protection, and we were able to acquire an RPG-7 rocket launcher and 36 rockets, effectively taking them from the hands of insurgents and preventing their use against Coalition Forces. These weapons were repatriated to a co-located Afghan National Army security force platoon to augment their firepower.

The S-5 section is comprised of MAJ Jeffrey Weston, and Master Sergeant Douglas Hayes. Projects that the section sponsors vary from funding new road construction to the weapons buy back program you see illustrated to the right.

Article continued on page 5.



RPG-7 and rockets purchased by MAJ Weston and MSG Hayes.



HHC Supply and Motor Pool

SSG James (Jimmy) Judkins, the Motor Sergeant and SFC Joe Young, the Supply Sergeant work together to prepare connexes for the upcoming move to Sharana. The two sections have been working feverishly to make sure that all the vehicles and company supply are organized, properly accounted for and in good working order prior to "the move." Each of the sections within CTF Chamberlain

headquarters have relied heavily upon these two sections in many ways to support their part of the move. From supplying boxes and tape for packing sectional equipment to performing maintenance and installing new parts on tactical vehicles, the supply and motor pool sections are a tremendous asset to CTF Chamberlain.

Continued on page 8



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM LTC (P) SWARTZ

Many of you have worked with local schools, Scout Troops, and other organizations to assemble and ship boxes of “goodies” and nice-to-have items to Afghanistan for your soldier. You may sometimes wonder whether you are sending the right items and whether they get used or not. Let me tell you “the rest of the story,” and you can decide for yourself.

We routinely receive boxes of supplies from home. Many of these are sent to individual soldiers by their families, while others are sent to our unit for general distribution. These latter Care Packages come from organizations around the country that have a heart for the personal needs of Service Members stationed overseas. My Command Sergeant Major in particular receives many such gifts from generous citizens in the US. He repackages those boxes for particular groups of soldiers within our Engineer Task Force, and sends them out to the Forward Operating Bases (FOB’s) where these “luxury” items

are in shortest supply and greatest demand. Many of your own soldiers contribute to these FOB Packages by sharing supplies that they have in turn received from you. That may come as a shock to you, but I hope you will see it as I do – not that your soldiers do not appreciate your gifts, but that they are generous with what they have and are willing to share with others who have less. After all, isn’t that one of the hallmarks of Americans? Please accept my thanks for your gifts to your soldier in the 240th and to our soldiers throughout the world, and at this special time of year please rejoice with me over the generosity I see in their hearts.

LTC (P) Swartz speaks with coalition partners.

To the Families of the 240th Engineer Group – Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas from Afghanistan! I would like to thank you all for the outpouring of support that has found its way to us in the form of cards, letters, and Care Packages. The continued support of our families back home and of the people of the United States is one of the key ingredients in the success of our mission.

LTC(P) Les Swartz
CTF Chamberlain
Commanding



Soldiers from A/27th Engineer Battalion receive care packages from CTF Chamberlain while living in a remote Forward Operating Base in Eastern Afghanistan

S3 Section November Report



Graduation ceremony for Afghan National Army Demining class sponsored by CTF Chamberlain.

November is a month in which we give thanks. We are thankful that we have made it this far in our deployment. We are thankful for having such a great family support group back home that we can rely on to take care of our families. We are thankful for living in a country that grants us liberty and freedoms that we often take for granted. We are thankful that we are in good health and spirits and most importantly, we are thankful for strength and encouragement that comes from our families, friends and community back home.

Thanksgiving dinner at the dining facility was quite nice. I am not sure what kind of turkey is bred in the wild to become a turkey roll, but whoever came up with this subspecies of poultry gets a "high-five" in my book. Dinner included the mutant turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, cranberry sauce, shrimp cocktail, freshly carved beef, and several kinds of pie and ice cream. It wasn't a home-cooked meal, but you rarely get those unless you are at home.

November has been a very active month (What month hasn't been very busy since we have arrived?) and in typical fashion, we have been

short-staffed with even shorter deadlines (almost like an episode of American Chop-pers). LTC Morton is enjoying some time away from the TOC and LTC Branscom is enjoying some well deserved time away from the JOC. I will not imply that the rest of the staff is enjoying the atmosphere with them away, because that would be wrong. On the contrary, we miss their presence and muscle power that they have with the Division staff.

November has been an active month for our Coalition partnership with the Afghan National Army. CTF Chamberlain has graduated a class of ANA deminers who have recently graduated from a phase 2 certification course. This certification means that the ANA Engineers have undergone classroom and practical field exercises to detect and neutralize landmines using electronic and hand tools designed for such a task. As you are well aware, Afghanistan is a heavily mined country with estimates ranging from as low as 400,000 landmines to over 10,000,000. The ANA will be able to start assisting with the demining effort and eventually train additional ANA Engineers how to demine. Yet another step in the right direction for an independently operating national army.

Perhaps Major General Joshua Chamberlain said it best when he wrote, "*The power of noble deeds is to be preserved and passed on to the future.*" I believe this saying applies to the Coalition partnership program in which we work so diligently in creating an independent and effective Afghan National Army. With each passing month, we are closer to having a better trained Afghan force and one step closer to returning home.



Demining equipment issued to graduates

Continued on page 4



Sunset over Bagram Air Field.

The S-3 shop prepared for another VIP visit, this time the CENTCOM Engineer. It came as a little bit of a surprise that the new CENTCOM Engineer was none other than COL Flanagan, former CTF Sword Commander, who LTC Swartz replaced back in April. I am not sure if the man really likes Afghanistan or what, but he was glad to be back and enjoyed scaring our battle staff with bellowing shouts from different ends of the building looking for his “Battle Captain!”

S-3 News Continued

MAJ Ouellette and MSG Moore were sent down to Sharana in order to assist with the the beginning of a new component to FOB Sharana. They have been very busy with getting the infrastructure, and plumbing problems consistent with this high elevation, and cold winter temperatures.

The 27th Engineer Battalion, CTF Chamberlain, has completed Operation Tiger Crossing II. They installed an additional two Bailey bridges across the Waygal River in the Kunar Province in Northeastern Afghanistan with the assistance of an ANA Engineer platoon from the 201st Corps. These bridges are located a little further up north than the 230’ Bailey bridge that spanned the Pesh River. The length of each Bailey bridge is 60ft and 100ft long, respectively. These bridges will support the economic growth of the villagers of Wanat, provide land access to surge supplies to FOBs that exist in the region and allow the infantry and Coalition forces access to remote areas where the enemy is known to reside. The ribbon cutting ceremony for these bridges is scheduled for November 29th.



Waygal River bridge near Wanat.

Article Submitted by 1LT Norman Stickney, the Information Operations Officer for CTF Chamberlain.



JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER UPDATE

Greetings from the JOC!!

Recently, the Joint Operations Center (JOC) liaison officers and non-commissioned officers have seen many changes. LTC Branscom left for his hard-earned two weeks of leave and I have been filling in for him. MSG Moore has moved to FOB Sharana to serve as the NCO in charge of ensuring soldiers and their equipment can be in or out processed from theater. This is a huge responsibility for MSG Moore and we wish him the best of luck.

MSG Wiley has stepped up to fill MSG Moore’s shoes at the JOC. Each day he works to prepare briefings for the morning update to the Chief of Staff and he also tracks significant activities (SIGACTs) throughout his shift.

The latest addition to the LNO team is MSG Bernard. He quickly transitioned to working on the team, and brings a great deal of professionalism to the table. He is a hard worker and a great addition to the team.

LTC Branscom continues to work every day with relentless tenacity. His main responsibilities are to keep the higher engineer staff, the Chief of Operations, and the Chief of Staff informed of CTF Chamberlain current operations and SIGACTs. He attends various meetings where he is called upon to speak about CTF Chamberlain issues, actions, and engagements with other task forces across the area of operations.

All members of the LNO team work hard to facilitate information flow between the Chamberlain staff and our higher headquarters. LNOs also have the responsibility of conducting danger area assessments for every SIGACT in the combined joint operating area. This requires the LNOs to be situationally aware at all times, but does not afford them many opportunities to be away from their workstation at the JOC during their shift. The LNO team is dedicated to assisting the Chamberlain staff with info dissemination and conflict mitigation.

Article submitted by 1LT Jessica Campbell, JOC Liaison Officer



Civil Affairs Section



MSG Hayes and MAJ Weston with the Wanat District Center in the background.

The month of November was a busy one for us as we spent most of it in the field attached to an infantry unit, conducting civil-military operations in support of bridge construction in their sector. It was a great mission, and one that enabled us to leverage our capabilities to their fullest effect.

At the beginning of the month, we flew by helicopter to a small firebase near the Pakistan border. From there, we convoyed to the village of Wanat in the Nuristan Province. In this village were two dilapidated bridges crossing the Waygal River that provided critical passage for Coalition Forces operating in the valley. Soldiers from the 27th Engineer Battalion, an airborne unit from Fort Bragg, were there to remove the existing bridges and install Bailey bridges to improve trafficability at each crossing site. Master Sergeant Hayes and I lived and worked alongside these soldiers in an effort to enhance their own force protection. These soldiers had already had their fair share of excitement in Wanat, and our task was to mitigate the threat by shaping both the attitude and the environment of the local Afghans.

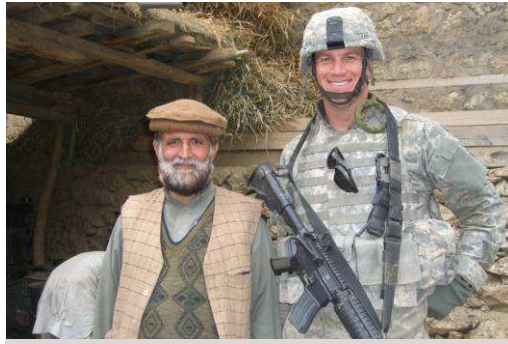
Within an hour of our arrival in Wanat, we found ourselves at the head table of a local shura – a leadership council that meets to discuss and resolve issues affecting the local area. There were about 70 Afghans in



Enjoying a cup of coffee at the patrol base.

attendance, to include the Governor of Nuristan. Bridge construction dominated the topic of discussion, and the value to local residents was fully recognized.

Each day MSG Hayes and I walked to the downtown bazaar and spent time talking with the locals, gauging their thoughts on the bridge construction, and building essential rapport. The people became friendlier and more willing



“Ernest Hemingway” and MAJ Weston..

to interact with us as each day passed. One of the more interesting Afghan gentlemen we developed a good friendship with was a teacher from the local boys’ school. He was a dead-ringer for Ernest Hemingway. When we asked him if he spoke English, he replied, “No...parlez vous Francais?” Master Sergeant Hayes and I just looked at each other. I tried to scrape up even the faintest recollection from my high school French class, but it was my polyglot partner who struck first with a quick-witted remark better left out of print. Fortunately the translation didn’t take for Ernest.



RPG-7 and rockets purchased by MAJ Weston and MSG Hayes.

We initiated a weapons buy-back program for CTF Chamberlain prior to leaving Bagram, as an enhancement to force protection, and about a week into our mission we were able to acquire an RPG-7 rocket launcher and 36 rockets, effectively taking them from the hands of insurgents and preventing their use against Coalition Forces. We repatriated these weapons to a co-located Afghan National Army security force platoon to augment their firepower.



MSG Hayes presents CTF Chamberlain coins to TF 27 soldiers who repelled an attack against their position two nights prior.

Down the road from our patrol base was the only surgical hospital in the Nuristan Province, and it was definitely in need. Master Sergeant Hayes and I conducted our own assessment to determine what we could do for them given the funding available to us. We sat down with the hospital administrators and, over hot green tea, discussed our findings and our recommendations. (Afghans are among the most hospitable people you will find.) We ultimately decided to fund the construction of a stone and mortar wall surrounding the hospital, two room additions, and repairs to their micro-hydro, the hospital’s primary source of power.



MAJ Weston talks with the locals near the bridge site in Wanat.

Finding ourselves in a good bargaining position, we asked if they’d allow us to use the premises to conduct a humanitarian assistance mission, and possibly get a little help from them. They agreed. A week later we had humanitarian supplies trucked in from Asadabad – mostly cold weather items such as wool blankets, sweaters, gloves, shoes, and tarps; but also personal hygiene bundles, books, school backpacks, and medical kits. In bulk it was a lot of stuff, and took us a couple hours just to organize it.

Continued on page 6

Civil Affairs Section continued



MSG Doug Hayes walks across a bridge recently completed by the 27th Engineer Battalion in the Wanat region.

We got the word out that the event would be taking place and on the morning of there were a few thousand anxious Afghans gathered outside the hospital. These events can often



A burqa-clad Afghan woman receives items during the humanitarian aid mission in Wanat.

be chaotic and can quickly get out of hand, but this was by far the most organized and orderly humanitarian aid mission we've conducted. There were about 1,500 Afghans that we were able to provide these items to, and roughly the same amount that we had to turn away.

This was another rewarding mission for us as we continually work to improve the infrastructural landscape here in Afghanistan. It was a far cry from our digs here on Bagram – we slept in an underground bunker that leaked when it rained; ate MRE's everyday; patrolled some very rugged terrain; often found ourselves in mud; and didn't shower for three weeks. We loved every minute of it.

Article written by MAJ Jeff Weston
Civil Military Operations Officer



Editorial Addition

Upon arrival back at Bagram, the S5 Section received a hearty welcome from the S-4 and BMO shops. These two shops combined their efforts to make a very special and unique welcome "home" present....



Aluminum foil practical joke played on the S-5 section.

Their entire office was covered with tin-foil. Computers, desks, walls, chairs, and even the computer mouse was covered. No good deed goes unpunished, this time was no exception.

Brigade Maintenance Office



MSG Dan Masessa, SGT Perry Bonsant, CPT Aaron King, and CW4 Ronnie Coates in front of the CTF Chamberlain sign.

Hello from the Brigade Maintenance Office (BMO) section!

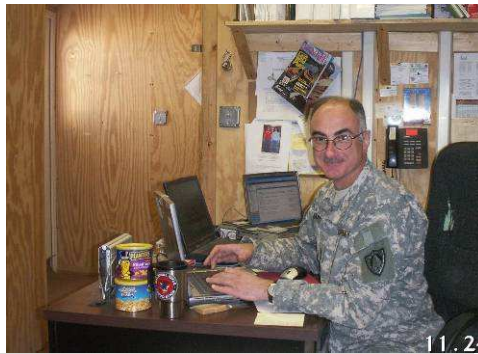
CW4 Coates, MSG Masessa, SGT Bonsant and I would like to wish all friends and family a happy holiday season. We've all managed to survive Thanksgiving and are happy to click off another milestone in our deployment. Thanksgiving also marks less than 120 days remaining of our mission in Afghanistan.

The BMO section (SGT Bonsant has a different meaning for BMO: Bonsant, Masessa, Officers) is busy making preparations for our upcoming move to FOB Sharana and deciding what must go and what must stay. Decisions, decisions. This time next month we should be getting acquainted with our new surroundings and adjusting our operation. I'm sure that SGT Bonsant will not miss the busy road and generators that run 24/7 just behind his B-hut! He's also pretty excited to get out of the closet that he works in and finally get a desk.



SGT Perry Bonsant enjoys another day of work from his spacious closet office in the BMO office.

MSG Masessa can hardly contain his enthusiasm about the move to Sharana as he works at his computers (he has four which must be some kind of record) solving the issue of the day.



MSG Dan Masessa hard at work at one of his four computers.

CW4 Ronnie "The Pit-Bull" Coates is our honorary Mainer from South Dakota. Not only has he forgotten more about maintenance than most will ever know, he also has a ton of "unique" sayings that MSG Masessa is compiling for publishing...and maybe black-mail.



CW4 Ronnie Coates aka "the Pit Bull" in his office at Bagram.

Chief Coates would like to put out a special thanks to the Family Support Group for their great support of his wife Virginia in SD. Also, a thank you for the gift certificate provide to her. SGT Bonsant would like to thank the Augusta Area Military Association for the Thanksgiving basket provided to his wife



CPT King sporting his crown from the daughters of MSG Masessa.

Jenn and the boys.

CPT King sports a crown complete with CPT rank sent by the Masessa girls and sends thank you to the Family Support Group for setting-up the video tele-conference...it was great to see the family. MSG Masessa puts out a thank you to the Maine Military Historical Society for having his "flat Daddy" attend their annual meeting.

The section is currently working with our two airborne engineer battalions to get snow plows and sand/salt spreaders ready for the winter. They're from North Carolina and the plows are big, so it's not quite as easy as mounting the Fisher plow on the old GMC pick-up back in Maine. The mission of providing our units with all of the critical repair parts required to keep the huge fleet of engineer equipment running and building roads continues every day and consumes much of our time.



The BMO section in front of a HMMWV.

BMO Soldiers hail from the following towns:

SGT Bonsant – Vassalboro, ME
MSG Masessa – Montville, ME
CW4 Coates – Rapid City, SD
CPT King – Augusta, ME

Article submitted by CPT Aaron King, the Brigade Maintenance Officer





The Supply and Motor Pool Sections pose with one of the Company's 5-Ton Trucks.

It is likely safe to say that these two sections carry the lion's share of the physical work required within the headquarters company of CTF Chamberlain. The mornings often begin with the two sections joining together for breakfast, then the work of priority begins for the day.

SSG James (Jimmy) Judkins, the Motor Sergeant recently received a coin of excellence from the Two Star General of Tank and Automotive Command (TACOM) for his work in modifying equipment for use in a combat environment. In addition, SGT Aaron Carey and SGT Shawn Hayden were recognized for their work with Mantech (civilian mechanics) in the repair of Huskys.



SGT Hayden does paperwork in the motor pool in preparation for the upcoming move.

SGT Hayden will soon become the S-1 representative in Sharana while the rest of the S-1 section stays back at Bagram. SGT Hayden will be the single person responsible for all personnel actions that need attention at Sharana. The motor pool will miss him greatly!

SPC Miller was recently awarded for her work in helping the Motor Pool to pass the Inspector General's high standard of readiness. Good job SPC Miller!

HHC Supply & Motor Pool

The supply section has been tremendously busy with several time sensitive projects during the month of November. Recently each soldier in the CTF Chamberlain was ordered to receive one Hemcon bandage. The supply section quickly rose to the occasion and ensured that everyone that was with the unit in Bagram received the bandage that is designed to quickly stop bleeding in the event of a serious wound. The unit has also been going through a complete inventory with a program called Total Recall.



SPC Joseph Emery, SPC Jennifer Paradis, SPC Zachary Casper, and SFC Joseph Young in the arms room.

Preparation for the move to Sharana has kept the section busy printing out hand receipts, and tracking missing items down. The supply section has one of the more challenging jobs as it relates to packing up to move down range. Every weapon, pen, printing cartridge, piece of paper, and pad of stick notes must be packed in a box clearly labeled and put in the proper connex with the packing list complete. This is an arduous task that requires patience and attention to detail.

SFC Joseph Young is the Supply Sergeant, and he runs a very organized supply room. The sign-in log gives evidence to the fact that they take care of a lot of needs of soldiers in the average run of a day. From connex inventory to issuing out body armor, every day is very busy for the SGT Young. He has volunteered much of his personal time to help other soldiers improve their physical fitness.

SPC Jennifer Paradis is the HHC Armorer, and carries the responsibility of ensuring the readiness of all personal and crew-served weapons. She has been a key player in convoy preparation, issuing weapons and ammo as well as being one of the 50 caliber gunners on many convoys. SPC Paradis has filled in for her



SPC Paradis pauses for the camera while in the turret behind the 50 cal. machine gun.

boss, SFC Young, in the Supply room while he was home on leave. Several people commented on how smooth things went while she was filling in for SFC Young. Once again organization is a key characteristic associated with SPC Paradis' way of doing things. One can clearly see in the picture to the left that all the weapons and other equipment are carefully aligned with great care.



SPC Emery cooks steaks at the motor pool.

SPC Joseph Emery has often been the man on the spot for many of the cookouts, and special meals sponsored by HHC. Whenever a cook has been needed, SPC Emery has stepped up to the plate and spent many hours in preparation as well as in clean up after most everyone else has gone their separate ways. In the picture above, we see SPC Emery helping out once again at a barbeque in the Motor Pool.



SPC Zachary Casper (right) and SGT Burnham pack boxes into a connex for moving.

SPC Casper has been a great addition to the team in the supply room. Whatever he is asked to do, he complies with a good attitude. He and SPC Emery are often seen together on the Gator gathering supplies for the unit.

Pictures provided by SPC Paradis



Construction Management Section



Several Korean Soldiers work outside our Brigade Headquarters buildings at FOB Sharana completing finish trim work for the inside of the Combined Task Force Chamberlain offices.

This has proven to be a busy month for the CMS Section. The Section has soldiers in Sharana, directing the construction required for CTF Chamberlain's move, and has others on leave and pass. Those remaining in Bagram are stretched thin, as they continue construction operations, prepare the Section for the upcoming move, and fill in for those who are away. Although CMS has repeatedly been asked to do more with less, the soldiers remain positive and have excelled in every mission.

As our Section prepares for the move, our office is transforming into what resembles a warehouse, with boxes everywhere. On a bright note, it's the first time we have been able to see 1LT Cheever's desk since we arrived in Afghanistan.

With the weather getting colder, and snow forming on the mountain tops, one might expect the construction projects to have slowed down. However, that assumption would be wrong. On the contrary, the Korean and Polish Engineers have recently been tasked with high-profile projects that have short deadlines, and the CMS soldiers in Sharana are racing the clock to get everything prepared for the move.

Members of CTF Chamberlain recently provided security for the shipment of equipment to Sharana. CMS extends a special thank you to SPC Damren, who braved the cold as a gunner on that mission. After spending a few days in Sharana, he and the other Chamberlain soldiers hitched a ride back to BAF on Black Hawk helicopters.

In conclusion, the CMS section is staying busy, and focused, while continuing to mark the days off the calendar when we will be able to return home.

Article written by MSG Mark Smith, the NCOIC of the CMS Section



Religious Support Team



Chaplain Andy Gibson (LTC) sits in his new chair at his recently assembled desk at FOB Sharana. The decorated Christmas tree and nativity scene mark the Christmas season.

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.” Isaiah 9:2-7

The story is told that Santa Claus once confronted his assistant. “How come there are so few presents for me to take this year?” questioned Santa as he prepared to leave on Christmas Eve. “I told you to bring in more toy makers to increase production!”

“I’m not sure,” said his assistant. “Maybe we could go down to the toy shop and see.” The two went down to the Toy Factory and opened the door. Inside they saw all the workers not working, but looking at the new hire. He was standing in the middle of the floor and singing. He was tall, had black hair, long side burns, and wore a white jump suit. As he sang, he swung his hips around provocatively.

“Oh you idiot!” exclaimed Santa, “I said to hire Elves, not Elvis!”



SGT Grace working at his new desk with a Christmas wreath from LLBean.

Well Thanksgiving is behind us and now we look forward to Christmas. I’m sure that even though our soldiers are not at home, there are plenty of preparations going on. It’s funny, it seems that I miss the things that usually seem so stressful. I miss going shopping, getting the tree, decorating – all the duties that I don’t normally look forward to. I guess there is a special joy in the preparing itself. I think it adds to the anticipation and the excitement of the day itself. This Christmas will be very different for most of us; we will not be together and our soldiers, for the most part, will be in a colorless and foreign land. It is easy to be sad at all of this, but if we continue to focus on what this time of year is all about, if we continue to prepare ourselves for the coming or the second coming of the Messiah, it might be a little easier to put it all in perspective. Remember that though we are apart, we are never apart from God and He is never apart from us.

Article submitted by CH (LTC) Andy Gibson



Anyone desiring to submit information for the newsletter can send it by e-mail to:

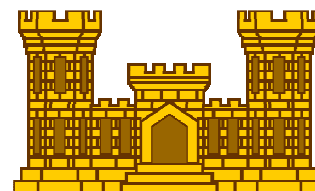
Nathaniel.Grace@us.army.mil

Further pictures can be found at the 240th Engineer Group’s website:

http://www.me.ngb.army.mil/Family/Family_Pages/240th/default.htm

The mailing address for our soldiers continues to be the same. The S-1 section will sort out what needs to be sent down to Sharana.

Soldier’s Name (without rank)
240th Engineer Group
APO AE 09354



**Bayonet!
Forward!**